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REP. SCANLON OPIOID BILL BECOMES LAW

Bill will cap opioid prescriptions, improve access to naloxone

HARTFORD – On Friday, Rep. Sean Scanlon (D-Guilford) was joined in Hartford by parents from Guilford and Branford to watch Governor Malloy sign Public Act 16-43, a bill co-sponsored and co-authored by **State Representative Sean Scanlon** (D-Guilford) that takes a comprehensive approach to combating Connecticut's heroin and opioid epidemic.

"Since taking office in 2015 I've made fighting this deadly epidemic one of my biggest priorities and I was incredibly proud to watch the bill get signed into law alongside several mothers from my district who sadly know the devastating consequences of this epidemic and who worked with me over the last year to help make this law possible," said Scanlon.

Overdose deaths related to heroin and opioids have risen dramatically in the last few years. In 2015, 522 Connecticut residents died of a heroin-related overdose - a 27% increase over 2014. In 2012, there were only 86 heroin-related overdoses in the state. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 4 in 5 new heroin users began by taking powerful prescription pain pills and often turn to heroin because of its cheap cost relative to prescription drugs.

Public Act 16-43 attempts to address the root cause of the epidemic by cutting back on the excess supply of prescription drugs in our society that were handed out in large quantities for minor surgeries only to be left in medicine cabinets where the risk of future abuse increases dramatically.

"I firmly believe reducing the number of excess prescription drugs in our society will ultimately save lives," said Scanlon. "This bill exempts chronic pain and terminally ill patients who need these pills to get through their day but ensures that the teenager getting their wisdom teeth out no longer goes home with 50 pills when they probably only need 10."

Public Act 16-43 has several key components:

Capping Prescriptions To Limit Excess Supply

- Limits all first-time and non-chronic pain opioid prescriptions for adults to a 7 day supply
- Exempts chronic pain and terminally ill patients
- Allows adults who are still in pain after 7 days to get a refill for an amount determined by their doctor
- Requires doctors prescribing an opioid to a minor to discuss the risks of addiction with the minor and their minor's parent or guardian

Ensuring First Responders Carry Life-Saving Drug

- Requires all 169 towns to update their local emergency medical services plan to ensure the that first emergency medical responder on the scene is equipped with naloxone, a life-saving overdose reversal drug
- Per the Department of Public Health, Connecticut EMS providers have used this drug on 7,100 individuals since 2012

Eliminating Insurance Discrimination For Overdose Reversal Drugs

- Prohibits commercial health carriers from requiring prior authorization for coverage of naloxone

Expanding Screening for Drug and Alcohol Abuse By Licensed Counselors

- Strengthens the ability for doctors to refer patients who they suspect of possible substance abuse to a licensed alcohol and drug counselor for further diagnosis, screening, and treatment

"This landmark legislation represents a significant step forward in our fight against heroin and opioid addiction," said Scanlon. "By becoming just the second state in the nation to cap non-chronic pain prescriptions, we will dramatically reduce the excess supply of pain pills that flood our society and are the reason four in five new heroin users begin their deadly addiction. There is no silver bullet solution to this crisis but, with this legislation, I'm confident we are making substantial progress that will prevent future addictions from beginning and help Connecticut communities and families currently affected by this epidemic."